

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUJUMB 00496 051453Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 CPR-01 TRSE-00 SS-15

NSC-05 /038 W

-----060635Z 017044 /20

R 041433Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6165

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUJUMBURA 0496

E 72

1165-WB/A

TAGS: PFOR, AFSP, BY

SUBJ: CUSTOMS PROBLEMS IN BUJUMBURA

REF : STATE 98926

1. WE MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR TALK WITH AMBASSADOR NZEYIMANA ON CUSTOMS PROBLEMS. THAT GO AROUND, PLUS TALKS HERE, APPARENTLY ESCALATED PROBLEM TO LEVEL OF PRIME MINISTER (ACCORDING TO CHAT WITH FONMIN MUGANGA MAY 3), AND FIRM DECISION WAS TAKEN TO END HARASSMENT (AT LEAST FOR NOW).

2. SOME OF NZEYIMANA'S "EXPLANATIONS" ARE SELF-SERVING AND INCONSISTENT WITH FACTS HERE, HOWEVER. FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE CUSTOMS OFFICIALS MAY BE SUSPICIOUS BY NATURE, IT IS ODD THAT THEIR SUSPICIONS SEEM TO EXTEND ONLY TO AMERICAN DIPLOMATS, BUT NOT OT OTHERS. ALSO, WE FIND IT LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCUSS THESE PROBLEMS EITHER WITH CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AT AIRPORT OR CUSTOMS SERVICE AT HEAD-QUARTERS, SINCE, ONCE THOSE PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN DECISIONS, ON WHATEVER BASIS, THEY ANNOUNCE TO US THAT MATTER IS NOW "OUT OF THEIR HANDS" AT A HIGHER POLITICAL LEVEL. THIS STARTS US OFF ON EXASPERATING ROUNDS WITH PROTOCOL OFFICE AND MINISTERS.

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3. AS FOR DIPLOMATIC POUCHES FROM OTHER THAN DEPARTMENT, THIS WAS NOT IN QUESTION THIS TIME BECAUSE ALL 19 BAGS CAME FROM WASHINGTON. IT HAS COME UP IN PAST, HOWEVER, AS A PRETEXT. CHIEF OF PROTOCOL RECENTLY ASKED FRG AMBASSADOR ABOUT BONN'S PRACTICE IN THIS REGARD, AND LATTER TOLD HIM THAT BONN MADE NO DISTINCITION ON ORIGIN

OF POUCHES, SINCE CONVENTION OF VIENNA (WHICH HE SHOWED TO PROTOCOL CHIEF) CLEARLY ALLOWS POUCHES FROM OTHER EMBASSIES AS WELL AS MINISTRY. PROTOCOL CHIEF DROPPED SUBJECT. PKCIDENTALLY, WITH CUSTOMS OFFICIALS THEMSELVES, DISPLAY OF VIENNA CONVENTION IS USELESS, AS THEY SAY THAT THEY ABIDE BY BURUNDI REGULATIONS, NOT CONVENTION.

4. WE THINK THAT WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO HAVE ANY FURTHER TROUBLE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE, AND FONMIN TOLD ME THAT ORDERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOR AID OFFICER LAMBACHER'S PERSONAL EFFECTS TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT INSPECTION (THIS HAS NOT YET HAPPENED). WE HAVE ALSO SENT NOTE OFFERING TO DISCUSS THIS WHOLE RANGE OF PROBLEMS, BUT I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF WE ARE TAKEN UP ON THIS. COPY OF NOTE WAS POUCHED APRIL 30 TO AF/C GRIBBIN.

MARK

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Sent Date: 04-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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